



The Ragged Irregular

91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association Newsletter

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New Memorial Proposal O.K.'d By Group

Col. Tom Gunn, Memorial Association first vice-president, who has polled 91st members on the proposed memorial at Bassingbourn, has just issued this bulletin:

As of July 11, 394 members had voted on the Prop Memorial: 379 for, 15 against, for a 96% favorable response. With 631 voting members, 379 represents 60% of the total possible vote. The 91st has officially endorsed the proposal.

Contributions should be made payable to the 91st Bomb Group (H) Memorial Association, Inc., and

mailed to our vice-president Tom Gunn, 1024 Woodland Drive, Arlington, Texas 76012. A special escrow account is being established for this effort.

He will acknowledge each contribution. It is recommended you retain the acknowledgement to remind you to list it on your tax return, and keep it off those nice guys at the IRS, should they be skeptical.

Colonel Gunn asked his warm appreciation to each of you be expressed in this publication.

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Accepted site for the 91st Prop memorial is the grass area to the right of the car on the curve.

Shot taken from Group Headquarters building toward the main gate.

Editor's note: Eastern Division chairman Paul Chryst flew to Bassingbourn at the end of May to represent the 91st in a site selection for the proposed memorial at the base, and to determine details and costs. Here is his report to Gen. Wray and the Group.

By Paul Chryst

My wife and I recently returned from an enjoyable week spent in Royston, Baldock and the many friendly villages around the lush countryside that abounds the Bassingbourn area. At the request of Gen. Wray, I agreed to be his delegate for the 91st BG, to meet with the new Commander of the Queen's Depot, Lt. Col. Hugh Lohan and David Crow, Secretary of the East Anglia Aviation Society.

The main objectives of this visit were accomplished: to reaffirm the total 91st BG support toward the construction of a permanent type memorial on the actual grounds of our former combat duty Station 121.

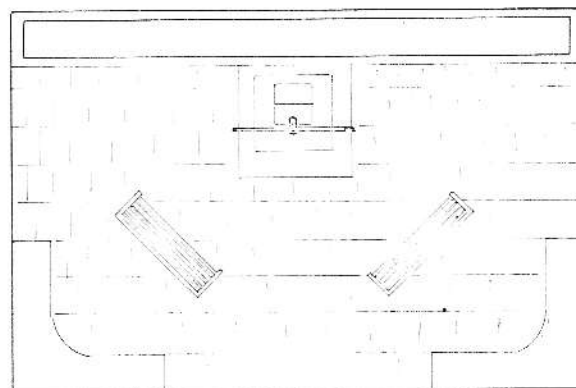
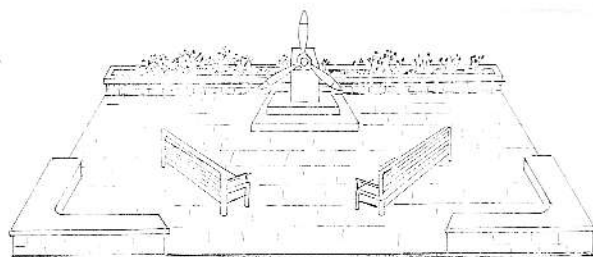
David Crow was appointed as British Liaison Officer and coordinator for the project in England. As a young lad, he often watched the B-17 bombers assemble over Bassingbourn while he walked to school at near-by Steeple Morden. Later, he learned to count the few bombers that returned to base which denoted "a tough mission."

This true friend of the 91st has done more work during the past ten years to assure his fellow countrymen that the English families will never forget the "Yanks" than anyone else we know. ("and a real big thank you from all of us, David.")

One morning was spent at Barclay's Bank in Royston, where the manager helped us to set up a 91st BG savings account into which our Memorial Fund Drive Donations could be deposited. Under the direction of a unanimous vote by the Eastern Division Committee, a good faith deposit of \$500 was made to open up the Fund Drive. Both David Crow and Col. Lohan agreed to act as co-

signers for the account. It is hoped that future contributions from our membership will help to bolster the Memorial Fund until the total project cost (approx. \$3000) is reached.

Another afternoon was spent with Col. Lohan, David Crow, and Mr. David Reed, a Master Stone Mason approved by the local District Council, whose workmanship can be seen at the American Military Cemetery at near-by Madingley. This meeting was scheduled to select the most appropriate site for the proposed Prop Memorial.



Three choices were offered by Col. Lohan. The first, on the left side of the Main Gates to Bassingbourn, was not chosen due to the limited space, opposite Gen. Montgomery's battle tank and the close proximity of the Catholic Chapel building.

The second site offered through the keen interest of Col. Lohan would have been on the grass area in front of the newly re-furnished 91st Control Tower Museum. This site could not be used because it was recently allocated to the famous RAF squadron stationed here. They will place a full sized Canberra jet bomber at the Tower.

The third possible site was viewed and happily accepted by the reviewing committee. As one stands at the main doors of our former Group Headquarters building, the sloping grass area bounded by the entrance road on the right was chosen and agreed to.

During our traditional 4 o'clock tea Col. Lohan announced that permission to build the 91st memorial had been given by the Commanding District General for the British Army Hqs. More free donations were revealed. The cost to purchase, transport, re-finish and mount an actual B-17 propeller on our Memorial was donated by an anonymous English friend of the 91st. Also, all of the evergreen trees which will form the curved backdrop for the stone engraved memorial were donated by another friend of the group.

Mr. David Reed, our architect, announced that the original cost quote would be honored and he promised to finish our project to everyone's satisfaction for May 1,

Each year the 91st B.G. Memorial Association participates in the American Memorial Day exercises held in Madingley, England and Opijnen, Holland. Money to purchase a floral wreath to be placed at the base of the flagstand at the American Military Cemetery at Madingley is sent from the Western Division treasury.

This ceremony is conducted under the auspices of the United States Embassy, and the U.S. Air Force in the United Kingdom, with cooperation of the American Overseas Memorial Day Association, British Friends, and the American Battle Monuments Commission.

1978. Actual layout plans were modified slightly for structural purposes and the meeting was adjourned as fully successful with a committed desire to start construction as soon as possible.



Lt. Col. Hugh Lohan, Bassingbourn C.O., EAAS secretary David Crow and Paul Chryst agree on the final selection site for the 91st memorial. Donated evergreen trees will form a gentle curve backdrop shown by outstretched arms.

The 91st wreath was presented by Mr. David Crow, secretary of the East Anglia Aviation Society and an associate member of the 91st.

At the same time the little village of Opijnen, Holland, places a fresh floral wreath on the gravesites of the eight 91sters buried in a private setting in the 300-year-old churchyard. All of the local villagers attend this special Memorial Day service every year to honor the 91st B.G. Money to cover our special wreath is sent yearly from the Eastern Division treasury by Bob Gerste-meier.

1978 Memphis Reunion Set July 19-22

Start making your 1978 vacation plans now-- dates for our National Reunion have been set for July 19-20-21-22 in Memphis!

Heading up the Reunion Committee are ex-322nd sqdn. bombardier Joe Gagliano and associate Life Member Frank Donorio.

Details of the reunion program and location of headquarters will be announced later.

Memphis was the site of our very first national reunion in 1967, and many will remember that get-together as one of the greatest.

City Has Big Plans For 'Memphis Belle'

Members who attended the 1967 National Reunion in Memphis will remember that the 91st plane the "Memphis Belle" occupied a position of honor at the Memphis National Guard Armory. In anticipation of the 91st meeting the plane was given some quick cosmetic surgery to cover up some of the ravages of time, but the Belle was far from being in good shape.

Now, thanks to the efforts of the Memphis Belle Memorial Association and interested citizens of the city it appears that better days are ahead for the old aircraft, and one of the outstanding memorials to World War II is on tap.

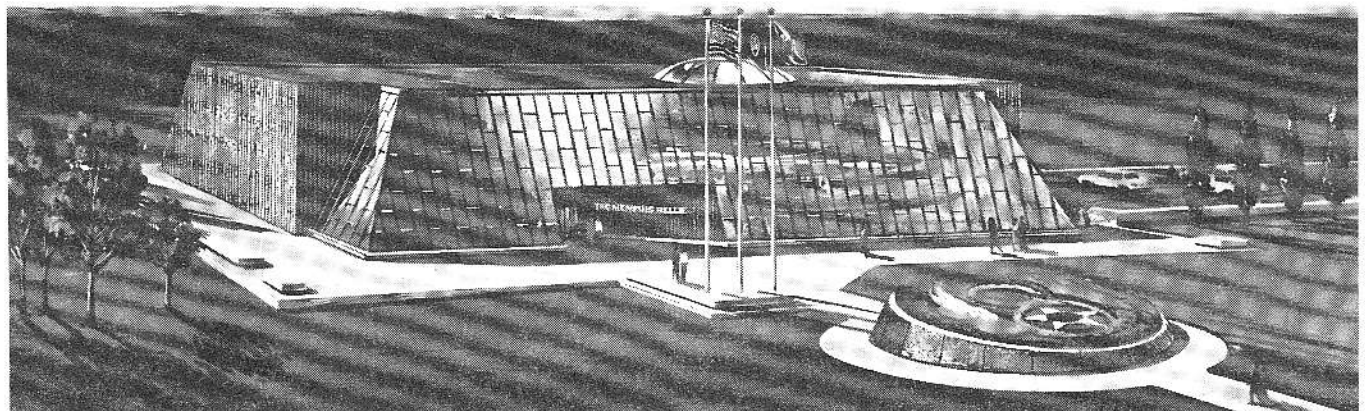
Because the land on which the Armory stands is being put to other use the Belle had to be removed from her long-time site. Persons interested in the Memphis Belle as a WWII symbol and also as a noted city landmark organized to save the ship, and began a determined effort to see that

the plane was not only saved from the scrap heap but that much greater glory lay ahead.

Today the Memphis Belle is at Air National Guard facilities at Memphis International Airport, where Guardsmen, Federal Express personnel, Memphis Area Vocational Technical School students and others are restoring the plane to original condition.

The Memphis Belle Memorial Assn. has an active program underway in the city to raise \$1 million for a superb museum to house the ship, complete with a theater where regular showings of William Wyler's famous movie, "The Memphis Belle" will be shown regularly to visitors to the memorial.

Renovation of the plane, which began in April, will take from six months to a year, it is estimated. Architectural plans for the museum have been completed, but construction will depend on the progress of fund-raising efforts.



Lansdale Rally Round Honors Gen. Wray

For the second year the Eastern Division Committee has sponsored a Rally Round in the Lansdale, Pa. area. The event was held at the Lansdale Holiday Inn June 4.

Honored guests were Maj. Gen. S.T. and Esther Wray. This year was the General's 45th graduation anniversary from West Point, a reunion they had attended just prior to the Lansdale Rally Round.

Winners of the pewter mug for coming the greatest distance to attend were Tony and Yvonne Ingignoli of Chicago, Ill.

The group watched "The Memphis Belle" in the afternoon, and after dinner viewed slides of the 1974 "Operation One More Time" during refueling activities.

Sunday morning there was a special get together at the home of Trudy and Bob Gerstemeier, division secretary, for coffee and Danish.

Another special guest was Aubin Pene and his wife Jacqueline, of California, who had been visiting 91st-er Charlie Booth in New Hampshire when they learned of the Rally Round.

Attending were: John and Kathryn Flinn, McClure, Pa.; Russell and Sylvia Ruth of Willow Grove, Pa.; Tony and Yvonne Ingignoli of Chicago, Ill.; Harry Hovermill of Arlington, Va.; Bob and Maxine Sponsel of Sturgis, Mich.; John and Madeline Kurylo of Ringoes, N.J.; Joe and Mae Fegeley of North Wales, Pa.; Russell and Laureen Wilson of Hatboro, Pa.; Andy and Helen Manzaro of Auburn, N.Y.

Rudy and Alice Moretti of Wooster, Ohio; John Parsons of Washington, D.C.; Nick Terefenko of Reading, Pa.; Aubin and Jacqueline Pene of Brea, Ca.; Nick Bankowski of Little Falls, N.J.; Joe and Mary Camelleri, of Reading, Pa.; Joe and Mary Jane Giambrone of Glenside, Pa.; Bob and Trudie Gerstemeier of Lansdale, and Gen. and Esther Wray, Shalimar, Fla.



Tony Ingignoli, who came from Chicago to attend, receives the mug for travelling the greatest distance from Gen Wray.



Aubin Pene presents Gen. Wray with a personal gift to honor his 45th anniversary of graduation from West Point.



Old buddies Rudy Moretti, Andy Manzaro, Joe Giambrone, Joe Camelleri, and Tony Ingignoli visit at Lansdale.

Rally Round Is 'Rocky Mountain High'

A very successful first Rocky Mountain Rally Round was held at Holding's Little America, Cheyenne, Wyoming, May 7. The event was headed by Glenn Boyce, Lakewood, Colo., with the help of Aulden Dunn of Cheyenne.

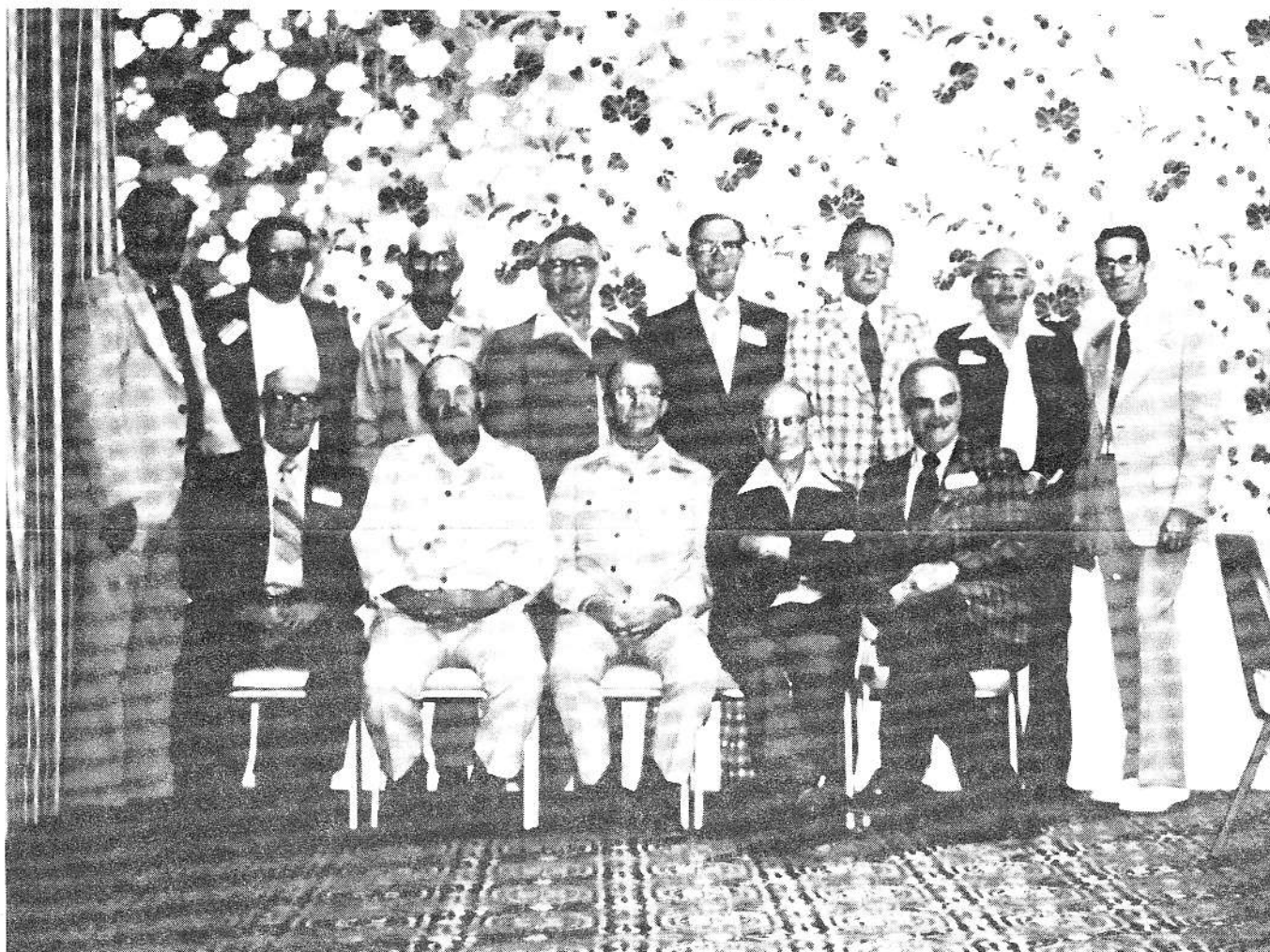
After a cocktail party and dinner the group viewed "The Memphis Belle," Schweinfurt Mission," and "Fight for the Sky."

Peter and Arline Hoffman, who came from Tempe, Arizona were awarded the "mug" for coming the greatest distance to attend by Col. Paul Jessop (Ret.) of Colorado Springs. M.J. and Marjorie Darnell from El Paso, Texas were given 91st highball glasses since they missed

coming the greatest distance by only a few miles.

Attending were: Mr. & Mrs. Peter J. Hoffman from Arizona; Mr. & Mrs. M.J. Darnell from Texas; Mr. Charles H. Bonner, Mr. & Mrs. Glenn V. Boyce, Col. & Mrs. Paul D. Jessop (Ret.), Mr. & Mrs. William R. Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Albert Preble, Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Simpson, all from Colorado; Lt. Col. & Mrs. Marion J. Havelaar (Ret.), Mr. & Mrs. Emmitt R. Wilson from South Dakota; Mr. Walter S. Brown and Mr. & Mrs. Aulden N. Dunn from Wyoming.

Guests were Mr. Michael Jessop and Mr. & Mrs. Hans Mathiesen of Colorado.



Members attending the Rocky Mountain Rally Round were, front row: Havelaar, Simpson, Miller, Wilson,

Jessop.

Second row: Hoffman, Brown, Dunn, Darnell, Preble, Bonner, Mathiesen.



Wives attending the Rocky Mountain Rally Round were, front row: Jessop, Simpson, Miller, Boyce,

Mathiesen.

Second row: Dunn, Havelaar, Hoffman, Darnell, Preble, Wilson.



Peter and Arline Hoffman receive the "mug" for coming the greatest distance to attend from Col. Paul Jessop (Ret.).



M.J. and Marjorie Darnell receive 91st highball glasses as runners-up in coming from the greatest distance.

From The Editor's Desk...

Paul C. Burnett Box 909 Auburn, AL 36830

Newest Life Member is LTC James D. Baird (Ret.), 6607 Cooper Ave., Middleton, Wi. 53562. Jim was one of the original 91st-ers and piloted Hell's Angels in the 322nd. He is now Wisconsin veterans representative for the U.S. Dept. of Labor.

Any 91st-ers who had to "hit the silk" during their flying days who are not already members of the Caterpillar Club may like to join the group. Info and application forms may be obtained from The Caterpillar Club, P.O. Box 1328, Trenton, N.J. 08607. There is no charge.

Maj. Larry Baird (Ret.) of Lynnwood, Wash., not only got the mug for coming the greatest dist-

ance to attend the California State Rally Round in February but got back a razor he had left behind at Bassingbourn in 1945. LTC Willis C. Stinson (Ret.) of Seminole, Fla., saw Baird's picture in the April R/I and relocated his old 91st buddy. The two had adjoining rooms in the 323rd officers house at the base and Stinson found Baird's razor after Larry's departure and thought to return it to him the next time their paths crossed. Thirty-two years later he returned it--complete with new blade.

A great new 91st memento is available from the Western Division Committee-- a full-color tie tac of the group insignia--exactly like the official car decals. The tac is about 5/8 inches in diameter. Price is \$2.50, which includes shipping.

Also on hand are some of the Group highball glasses that were such a hit at the last Reunion. They are priced at \$5 per half dozen or \$10 per dozen, which includes shipping. Orders for either of these items should be sent to M/Sgt. George Parks, 109 Wilshire Ave., Vallejo, Ca. 94590. Make checks payable to the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Assn., Inc.



We have very belatedly learned that former 323rd squadron C.O. John C. Bishop died June 18, 1976. John was with the 91st from July, 1942 through March, 1944. He was squadron operations officer before becoming C.O. and piloted the Careful Virgin. A picture of John "cutting the grass" in his plane after his 25th mission has been widely reprinted.

John became a Life Member of the Memorial Association in 1970 at the Tampa Super Rally Round.



John C. Bishop, Charles A. Bennett, John T. Gladstone.

George Jacobs, who was a 324th sqdn. navigator in '44-'45, has been awarded a 1977 Marconi Memorial Gold Medal of Achievement by the Veterans Wireless Operators Association. Jacobs is Director of Engineering for the Board of International Broadcasting.

He was an official with the Voice of America for 27 years before taking his present position. Last year he received the U.S. Information Agency's Superior Honor Award for his accomplishments at VOA.

We have received word that ex-91st-er Albert Torin of Tuscon, Az., passed away January 9, 1977. His wife Fried lives at 3537 E. 4th St., Tuscon, Az. 85716.

Contact your buddies NOW about the 1978 REUNION! Let's all GO!